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AUTHOR Beck, Klaus
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ABSTRACT

For more than 30 years, Kohlberg's theory of moral development has been tested across the world. This paper reports on two studies that investigated people's state of moral thinking and whether or not there are phenomena that cannot be explained in terms of Kohlberg's theory. The first study examined the moral thinking of a group of students, ages 16 to 21, who were attending vocational schools. Students had to make a moral judgment on an imaginary scenario. Results showed that students in the business school reported more heterogeneous opinions when compared to students attending general education schools. In the second study, which is ongoing, researchers are following apprentices in the insurance industry over a period of four years. These students were also asked to state their opinions on moral dilemmas. Ongoing research should reveal whether or not these participants are becoming homogeneous in moral judging or if they will remain heterogeneous. Researchers will examine the students' evaluations separately for different subjects at school, realizing that one and the same atmosphere will affect persons on different moral stages in a different way. Current findings were not dependable enough to decide between Kohlberg's and competing theories of moral development. (Contains 11 references.) (RJM)

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The Segmentation of Moral Judgment of Adolescent Students in Germany - Findings and Problems

by

Klaus Beck

Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz

Mainz, Germany

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The Segmentation of Moral Judgment of Adolescent Students in Germany - Findings and Problems

Abstract

The Kohlberg theory of moral development states that the individual's competence of judging moral issues is a „structured whole". This implies that a person well established on one of the six stages generates internally consistent moral judgments across varying contents. An alternative to this „homogeneity postulate" is provided by the „heterogeneity postulate" conceding that, at a given point in time, an individual may produce judgments on different stages depending on the context of the moral problems involved.

This paper offers an approach to clarify and sharpen the concept of heterogeneity, i.e. the segmentation hypothesis, in order to make it accessible to empirical testing. Two studies on adolescents are reported (the second with a longitudinal design being in progress) presenting findings on individual moral judgment differences and also on conditions under which they emerge. Some implications as to related practical problems, namely the moral education trilemma, are discussed.

Address:
Univ.-Prof. Dr. Klaus Beck
Johannes Gutenberg-Universitaet Mainz
FB03, Lehrstuhl fuer Wirtschaftspaedagogik
55099 Mainz, Germany
Tel. (6131) 39-2009 FAX (6131) 39-2095
e-mail: beck@pop.uni-mainz.de

The Segmentation of Moral Judgment of Adolescent Students in Germany - Findings and Problems

Introduction

For more then 30 years Kohlberg's theory of moral development has been spreading all over the world and it is still stimulating studies which are, on the whole, of two types: (1) application oriented and (2) theory testing oriented. Broadly speaking, the former type seeks to investigate how far people's state of moral thinking has developed, whereas the latter tries to find out whether there are phenomenons which can't be explained in terms of the theory.

This paper reports two studies, one of the first and one of the second type. The first study (type 1) was carried out with students mainly at the age of 16 to 21 from different kinds of German schools and was inquiring, among other points of interest, the level of their moral thinking. The findings and also some results from other studies caused us to start another project (type 2) where we are currently trying to test especially one of the implications of the Kohlberg theory, namely the hypothesis of homogeneity of moral judgment (cf. Colby/Kohlberg with Kauffman 1987a, 6). Our interest in this element of the theory has been additionally inspired by a special arrangement in our German system of education. About 65 % of an age group undergo an apprenticeship after having finished full time compulsory school. In this treatment which lasts for up to three years they normally spend two days a week at school and three days at their company. Our question is whether this treatment supports a moral development which leads to a „segmentation" of moral judgment in the following way: The

world of business is dominated by the laws of competition and the search for profit, i.e. by the principles of instrumental and strategic thinking. On the other hand, besides this stage 2 oriented field of vocational experience, the young people are (again) confronted with the world of school which is (or should be) ruled by a moral atmosphere of higher stages. Of course, both „worlds" - public schooling and economy - are not supposed to be actually „homogeneous". In a company you could observe social interactions based upon universalistic moral thinking as well as you are likely to discover situations in school, where egocentric motivations are predominant. Nevertheless, if these two locations of learning underlie at least a general drift in the two directions mentioned above, it is of interest to look at the effects that they engender on the development of the young apprentices' moral thinking who, of course, are also influenced by family life, by peers, and other contexts of social interaction. We are wondering whether they show tendencies of partitioning off separate realms of moral argumentation, say, one of business and vocation located on stage 2, and another one of private affairs located on higher stages.

Remarks on the concept of segmentation

It is not easy to give a clear definition of „segmentation" and, consequently, it will be rather difficult to elaborate a measuring procedure by which valid information about segmentation can be gathered. As Kohlberg, Colby and Kauffman state, each stage represents a „»structural whole«" functioning as a moral „thought organization" (1987a, 7). They claim that a person's moral thinking on her/his highest level „will be quite internally consistent, and ... will form a structured whole across widely varying content" (1987a, 8). If we call this assumption the „homogeneity postulate" we may confront it with the „heterogeneity postulate", stated e.g. by

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Rest (1979). The „heterogeneity postulate" says that individuals simultaneously can make use of arguments of different stages depending on the content area the problem in hand belongs to. The range of stages an individual has at her/his disposal is limited by the highest stage she/he can refer to in any context.

However, Kohlberg and his co-workers view one exception from the validity of the homogeneity postulate. It doesn't hold during periods of transition where arguments of two adjacent stages will be used. The phenomenon of *décalage* may also be put under this heading because it can be understood as a late phase of transition. But there is yet another reason for getting arguments of different stages from a person. The authors also point out that there is a gap between moral competence and moral performance (1987a, 5). Depending on the type of problem, the context or realm, „and other factors" persons may use arguments lower than their highest stage (ibid.).

The distinction of competence and performance can, in turn, be interpreted ambiguously. In a *logical sense* it says that, by definition, every case of heterogeneous argumentation of a person has to be understood as a matter of variance in individual performance. To make use of the distinction in this logical way seems to be an attempt to immunize it against empirical investigation. In an *theoretical sense* the notion of competence seems to refer to the highest stage a person has reached (disregarding any realm or problem type). The notion of performance, however, is pointing to the conditions under which a moral judgment below the competence stage is uttered. In this interpretation it is supposed that there is a set of internal factors (yet unknown) dragging down the competence argument of a person to a performance level less elaborated. Kohlberg and his co-workers seem to think of this conceptualization

when they stress that they „do not assume that people always use their highest stage of moral reasoning" (1987a, 8).

Looking at the scoring procedure there is still another case for differences between an argument produced by a person and her/his competence stage: Calculating a summary score for a dilemma is a way to find an average score which, by mathematical model, lies (in any sense) in the middle of some single scores. These single scores, in turn, stem from a diagnosis of an utterance of a single moral argument. Now, the rules for scoring „allow scores to be assigned at all five stages" (Colby/Kohlberg with Kauffman 1987a, 45). Consequently, the score symbolizing an individual's (modal) stage of competence may (and often will) lie under the maximum score reached by a person in the course of an interview. This form of deviation does not appear in the discussion on the theory of moral judgment quoted above though it might be of the same nature as the theoretical competence-performance-distinction mentioned first.

It is difficult to evaluate whether the Kohlberg group is treating heterogeneity as a logical or as an theoretical problem. On the one hand they discuss it in terms of error of measuring (Colby/Kohlberg with Gibbs/Lieberman 1987a, 90-91), i.e. as a matter of logic (of theory and modelling), on the other hand they are stating the „homogeneity postulate" as a hypothesis which could be tested by empirical investigation, i.e. as a matter of diagnosing in terms of the psychological distinction between competence and performance (e.g. Colby/Kohlberg with Kauffman 1987a, 7-9; Colby/Kohlberg 1987a, 69-70). But in the latter case they don't feel to be already capable of stating the conditions under which the „heterogeneity postulate" could be falsified: „At this point, the performance variables that determine fluctuation of stage use

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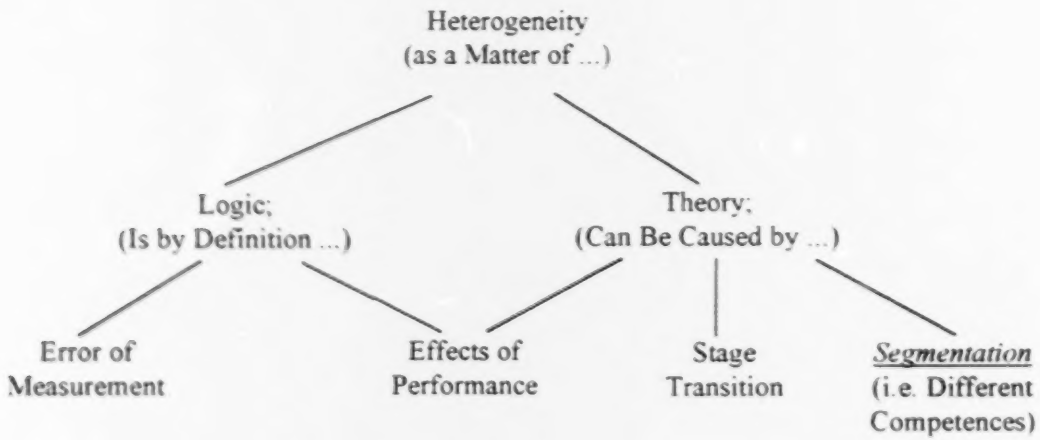
have only begun to be delineated, and this represents a particularly important direction for future research" (Colby/Kohlberg with Kauffman 1987a, 8).

With regard to this situation we try to make some first steps in dealing with heterogeneity, both, theoretically and empirically. Theoretically we refer to the concept of domain specifity of cognitions following e.g. Resnick (1987) and Brown/Collins/Duguid (1989) (see also Colby/Kohlberg with Kauffman 1987a, 8-9!). Without going into details here we assume that - to put it cautiously - individuals may have different stable preferences for stage principles depending on the realm of action (e.g. business, family) or, more specifically, on the type of situation (including social and material circumstances) - in general, depending on the context of action. Be careful not to confuse this with the difference between hypothetical and real dilemma judgments (cf. Colby/Kohlberg 1987a, 70). As in the case of the Heinz-dilemma which is located in the family context it is also possible to develop hypothetical dilemmas for other realms. As a first attempt at a definition we call (relatively) stable preferences a „*segmentation*" of moral judgment if they vary to some extent systematically according to the context. (The notion of stability in this formulation may be interpreted in two dimensions, one relating to time, the other relating to internal consistency in the Kohlbergian sense quoted above.)

In the light of possible long-term segmentations of moral judgment with domain-specific consistency it would be of great interest to rethink the Kohlberg theory. If there were relatively strict „boundaries" dividing different contexts one could consider moral development as a bundle of independent processes parallel in structure but uncoordinated in progress - an assumption which has not only accidental similarities with the concept of

dimensions of intelligence (see e.g. Guilford 1967). From the point of view of the segmentation approach the case of homogeneity in the sense of Kohlberg's theory could then be interpreted as a *result* of a person's living in contexts with equal moral atmospheres and not as an *initial configuration* of the internal disposition of human beings to think about moral problems by means of *one* structured whole. Following Kohlberg nonetheless in the distinction between competence and performance, we can now state in a second more radical attempt: The „segmentation postulate" states that the development of different moral judgment competences takes place simultaneously but indepently in relation to different contexts. Figure 1 gives an overview of the four cases discussed.

Fig. 1: Segementation as a Case of Heterogeneity of Moral Judgements



Study 1

The first study was carried out in the early nineties. We used the MUT (Moralisches-Urteil-Test; Lind 1978) to assess the stage of moral development of N = 9.146 students attending the following different schools at the secondary level:

Schools for Business Education

- full time, lower secondary level („Wirtschaftsschule") ['Busin.Low']
- full time, higher secondary level („Wirtschaftsgymnasium") ['Busin.High']
- part time („dual system"), apprenticeship („kaufmännische Berufsschule")
  ⇒ (a) retail ['BApp/retail']
  ⇒ (b) production industry ['BApp/indust.']
  ⇒ (c) banking/insurance ['BApp/bk,ins']

Schools for General Education

- full time, lower secondary level („Realschule") ['Genrl.Low']
- full time, higher secondary level („Gymnasium") ['Genrl.High'].

The MUT measures preferences for judgments and therefore overestimates the development of moral competence by at least one stage; but for the following this is of minor importance. The test presents two dilemmas, one dealing with the problem of euthanasia (similar to Kohlberg's dilemma No. III'), the other focusing on the secrecy of telephone calls in a company, where the manager has recorded some pieces of conversation between his staff and union officials, whereby the workers have to decide whether to steel the tapes or not. In both stories the actors decide for one alternative. The students were asked at first to what extent they agreed/disagreed with the decision of the actor(s) on a five steps scale. Then they were presented six arguments „pro" and six arguments „contra" the decision, each of them on one

of the six Kohlberg stages. For every argument they have to tell how adequate they feel it is (again on a scale, this time seven steps).

Table 1 shows the stages preferred mostly within the two dilemmas. If one interprets these measures as indicators for the level of moral development the off-diagonal cells should - very strictly speaking - be void. The cases on the diagonal cells sum up to 23,4 %. With respect to stage transition we may weaken this strong criterion by including all cases judging within the range of two adjacent stages. This weak homogeneity index contains 63,6 % of all cases (cf. the cells within the bold lines). No less than 36,4 % are left to think heterogeneously.

Tab. 1: Stage Preferences in MUT-Dilemmas*

Steeling Dilemma	Euthanasia Dilemma						
	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6	Total
Stage 1	17 0.2 %	34 0.4 %	26 0.3 %	48 0.6 %	60 0.8 %	59 0.7%	244 3.1 %
Stage 2	37 0.5 %	115 1.5 %	81 1.0 %	104 1.3 %	142 1.8 %	116 1.5 %	595 7.5 %
Stage 3	87 1.1 %	161 2.0 %	166 2.1 %	257 3.3	400 5.1 %	372 4.7 %	1.443 18.3 %
Stage 4	50 0.6 %	101 1.3 %	95 1.2 %	201 2.5 %	275 3.5 %	374 4.4 %	1.069 13.6 %
Stage 5	110 1.4 %	132 1.7 %	253 3.2 %	617 7.8 %	949 12.0 %	1 242 15.7 %	3.303 41.9 %
Stage 6	43 0.5 %	85 1.1 %	110 1.4 %	211 2.7 %	379 4.8 %	404 5.1 %	1.232 15.6 %
Total	344 4.3 %	628 8.0 %	731 9.3 %	1.438 18.2 %	2.205 28.0 %	2.540 32.2 %	7.886 100 %

* Pearson-Chi-Square-Test for linear dependency: $p \leq .000$; missings: 1.260

Looking at the differences between students attending vocational schools, i.e. cases settling into the realm of business and strategic thinking we remark a tendency towards heterogeneity compared to students in general education schools (see Table 2, 'Busin.'-columns as compared to the „Genrl."-columns to their left; first two pairs of columns). The number of cases more likely to be heterogeneous is lower in the „Genrl."-groups in comparison with to the „Busin."-groups. Within the apprentices groups („BApp."-columns) there is again an incline in heterogeneity from the bank/insurance group to the retail group. Possibly, this is an effect of the growing difference between vocational school and business; in banks and insurances the work-places are much more „desk-oriented" (as in schools) than in shops.

Tab. 2: Homogeneous and Heterogeneous Stage Preferences by Student Groups (p.c.)*

Preferences	Genrl. Low	Busin. Low	Genrl. High	Busin. High	BApp./ retail	BApp./ indust.	BApp./ bk,ins.	total.
strictly homogeneous	21.5	18.8	26.4	27.3	20.5	23.8	24.5	23.4
weak homogeneous+	58.2	53.0	74.1	69.6	53.1	65.6	71.6	63.6
heterogeneous	41.8	47.0	25.9	30.4	46.9	34.4	28.4	36.4
N	1.058	1.100	1.215	1.265	1.236	1.142	870	7.886

* Legend: see above; missings: 1.260 + including the cases of strict homogeneity

As it were, the data can't dispel the conjecture of the existence of heterogeneous moral thinking. On the contrary, computing the individual portion of variance due to the interaction of story x stage it is found to be 14 % for the whole sample (the interactions story x pro/con and stage x pro/con are 9 % and 15 %, respectively).

Two other German studies have also found discrepancies in the individual judgment behavior. Hegner/Lippert/Wakenhut administered a variant of the MUT to soldiers. In summarizing their results they state that there is a clear difference between the judgments on military and on non-military dilemmas (1983, 103). The proportion of possibly segmentating people in their sample is ranging in different subgroups from 8,3 % (conscientious objectors) to 32,8 % (reservists). Hoff/Lempert/Lappe report data from a seven year longitudinal study on 19 skilled workers. They used the method of clinical interviews to assess the level of moral development. At the starting point in 1980 they found only 2 of the 19 persons to be „homogeneous". At the end, in 1986, 8 of them were reasoning homogeneously (1991, 206). The authors comment on this that they are not sure whether the shift to homogeneity stems from an „innerpsychic" tendency towards the structured wholeness of moral judgment or - the other way round - from a convergence of the different realms of action in terms of their moral atmospheres (1991, 228-229).

Study 2

To get more insight in the moral thinking on different topics, late in 1994 we started a longitudinal study with apprentices in the insurance industry. In two classes of a vocational school we presented four dilemmas by questionnaires analogous to the SRM (Sociomoral

Reflection Measure) developed by Gibbs and Widaman (1982). This instrument is somewhat like a paper-pencil form of the MJI (Moral Judgment Interview by Kohlberg). In 1995 we included new classes of students and we will continue in doing so until 1997. Additionally, subsamples of each cohort are assessed with the MJI. Unfortunately, we have neither got the results of the follow-up measurings nor finished scoring the interviews yet. We are still coding transcripts and analyzing the data collected in the last winter season.

Our four dilemmas are dealing with problems from different realms of action. (1) As an anchor dilemma we use Kohlberg's Heinz-story and we are categorizing it as to be drawn from the *family* context. (2) The second dilemma for the non-vocational realm focuses a *peer* problem: A 17 year old orphan boy living in residential care asks his friend to help him steel the cashbox of the administration staff. He wants to escape the harshness of rules in the hostel and try his luck living as an artist. Should his friend help him?

Two additional dilemmas deal with problems in companies, the first of them concerning an internal, the second an external conflict. (3) An employee is asked by his superior to forge the sales report in order to raise the amount of commission. The superior needs the money urgently to master short-term financial problems. (4) An official of an insurance company is asked by a widow to prompt the payment of her late husband's life insurance benefits. However, by chance he has got an information from a friend that the deceased husband had already been seriously ill when he signed the contract without mentioning a special risk.

In all stories we ask the question of what to do and why varying the circumstances of action as is done in the Heinz-dilemma by Gibbs and Widaman (1982). In order to get authentical

data comparable with original Kohlberg studies we are scoring the answers according to Kohlberg's own rationale published by Colby and Kohlberg (1987b). Table 3 gives an overview on the cumulated results for the four dilemmas.

Tab. 3: Cumulated Stage Scores in Four Dilemmas

Count / Row Pct	**Modal Stage** I	II	III	IV	V	total
Company: ext. relations	**11** (15,1%)	**23** (31,5%)	**38** (52,1%)	**1** (1,3%)		73
Company: int. relations	**2** (2,8%)	**43** (59,7%)	**27** (37,5%)			72
Family: Heinz		**12** (15,8%)	**61** (80,3%)	**1** (1,3%)	**2** (2,6%)	76
Peers: hostel	**6** (8,2%)	**20** (27,4%)	**47** (64,4%)			73

It can easily be seen that in the business context the preferred moral stages tend to be lower than in the private contexts. To some extent the peers dilemma and the company: ext. relations dilemma show a certain similarity in the distribution of stage use frequencies. On the other hand the differences between the family dilemma and the company: int. relations dilemma are all the more obvious. Of course, the figures in Table 3 show values aggregated along the four dilemmas. They don't say anything about individual segmentation. Now, Table 4 presents data on the intrapersonal use of stage principles on the four different dilemmas.

Table 1: Arguments Used by a Person in Four Dilemmas (N = 83)

arguments on ...	**homo-geneous** 1 stage	**heterogeneous** 2 adjacent stages	3 adjacent stages	3 stages not adjacent
total	**32**	**41**	**8**	**2**
	out of them on stage(s):			
	I: 1	I/II: 4	I-III: 7	II/III/V: 1
	II: 6	II/III: 37	II-IV: 1	I/II/V: 1
	III: 23	III/IV: -	III-V: -	-

Only 32 of the 83 apprentices are using just one stage for their judgments in all dilemmas they have worked on. Another 41 are arguing on two neighboring stages, mainly on stages 2 and 3. But there are also 10 cases making use of more than two stages, two of them within a spread across four or even five stages. While the 41 cases in column 3 could be seen as persons in transition the remaining 10 apprentices may be suspected to be „pure segmentators". To find out if the 41 subjects are really in a state of transition or stable segmentation we have established a longitudinal study. We will look at our apprentices after one, two, three and four years to determine whether they are on the way to becoming homogeneous in moral judging or whether they are tending to remain heterogeneous.

In order to discover possible reasons for the divergent shift in the moral development of our apprentices we also asked them to tell us something about their perceptions of the different contexts they live in. Theoretically we used a framework developed by Wolfgang Lempert (1994) to describe moral atmospheres along the rationale of the Piaget/Kohlberg theory. He

suggests that six dimensions of social interaction should be distinguished, each of which can constitute either an expediting or a restricting stimulus for moral development:

a) esteem, recognition (obtained vs. withdrawn)

b) conflicts (overt/manifest vs. repressed/transferred/latent)

c) communication (free/symmetric vs. standardized/one-way/manipulative)

d) cooperation (equality/participation vs. subordination)

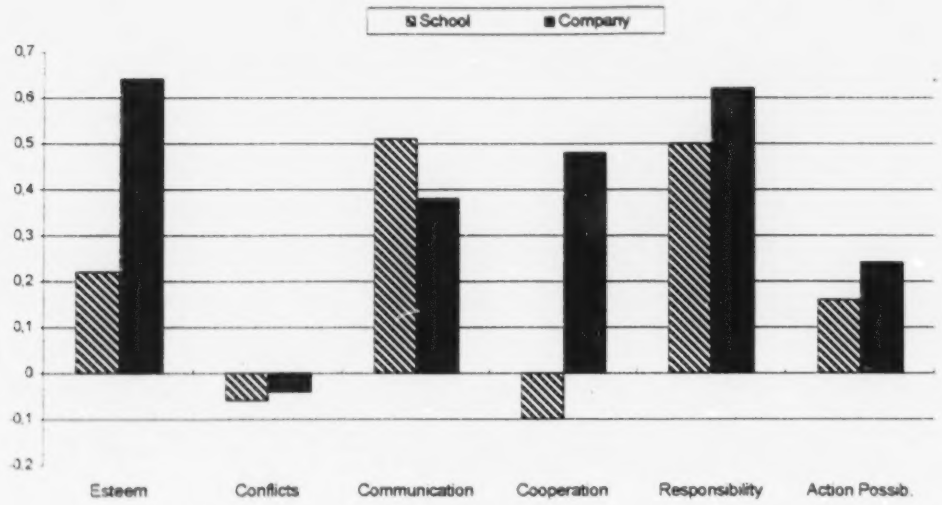
e) responsibility (adequate ascription vs. over-/undercharging)

f) action possibilities (adequate vs. over-/undercharging).

Each dimension is contributing to moral development depending on its characteristic perceived by the individual. To give a short overview we computed an index for each dimension running from -1.0 („dragging down") through 0.0 (stabilizing/neutral) to +1.0 (stimulating/ fostering).

Figure 2 shows a comparison of the values for the company and for the school context in all six dimensions. Obviously, most of the apprentices perceive the school environment not as positive as the working and learning conditions in their companies. Only with respect to communication and cooperation the school seems to be „better", i.e. more stimulating than the business context. It can't be excluded that the students experience a certain kind of „lassitude" towards school because they had been forced to visit this institution already for ten or even twelve years.

Fig. 2: Characteristics of Moral Atmospheres: School vs. Company



These findings are contrary to our preceding assumptions. So, we are now going into more detail in analyzing our data. Two aspects need to be scrutinized more carefully. Firstly, we will have to examine the students' evaluations separately for different subjects at school. A first glance on the data seems to reveal that subjects like German, Religion, Sports, and Social Studies offer more/higher degrees of stimulating incentives for moral development than Economics and Accounting. Secondly, we have to be aware of the fact that one and the same atmosphere will affect persons on different moral stages in a different way. Therefore it will be important to work out single case studies in which all these individual conditions are observed carefully. This means also that we have to include in our studies the information about the perceived characteristics of the family atmosphere and the peer context on which we have collected data, too. As a provisional result it is to be stated that the tendencies

towards moral segmentation mentioned above are not a direct and linear function of the given reality of the so-called dual system as a treatment for vocational education. The connections between the personal life circumstances, the individual stage of moral and cognitive development on the one hand and the further growth (or decline) of moral competence on the other hand are obviously complex and therefore need complex conceptualizations of investigation.

Discussion

The reported findings are not dependable enough to decide between the two alternatives of modeling the structure of moral competence (i.e. sensu Kohlberg vs. sensu Rest). Moreover, it was pointed out in the second chapter that even if we found heterogeneous intrapersonal judgments to be stable over years it could be argued that this were merely a matter of performance. If this argument is not intended to serve as an immunization of the „structured whole" assumption (or „internal consistency" assumption) a rationale is needed for differential diagnosis of segmentation. In our opinion the distinction between competence and performance is measured by hypothetical vs. real dilemmas and by well considered vs. spontaneous judgments. The MJI as well as the SRM, in this view, should be apt to grasp moral competence whereas instruments like the MUT and also the DIT (Defining Issues Test; Rest 1979) seem to represent performance measures. Yet at present, the distinction between „hypothetical" and „real" is rather vague as well as between „well considered" and „spontaneous". Nevertheless, in our opinion the dilemmas and the procedures we use in our study put us on the safe side in measuring competence rather than performance.

Besides the question of whether Kohlberg's contention of a structural whole or the contention of domain specifity of moral judgment is valid we are facing a basic problem in moral education, at least in the realm of business. If it is accepted as an educational objective that people should become homogeneous in making moral judgments we seem to be confronted with an irritating alternative: (1) On the one hand we may try to boost the individual's moral development to the highest attainable level. In this case we run the risk of making her/him rather incompetent in the field of business. If it is true that this area is dominated by the principle of strategic exchange, by „the moral legitimacy of pursuing one's own interests" (Colby/Kohlberg with Kauffman 1987a, 26) then a person on stage 4 or 5 will not be prepared to fulfill her/his professional duties inconsiderate of the consequences for the affected others. In other words: Such a person will be dequalified and will not be a successful manager or member of staff. (2) On the other hand we could try to keep the individual down on a homogeneous stage 2. In this case we may reach the objective to qualify her/him to become a successful businessman at the head of the pack. At the same time, however, she/he will not belong to the kind of persons we think of when we are talking about caring and dependable partners, friends, parents, or citizens.

Rethinking both alternatives we might be glad about Kohlberg being wrong concerning the structural wholeness. For in this case we could try to do both: (3) To develop the moral judgment competence as high as possible for applications in non-business affairs and, at the same time, to orientate the moral thinking in business affairs towards stage 2, i.e. to effect a domain specific segmentation. Thus we would reach the objective to make a person functioning as a well adapted member of our societies. However, at the same time we would fail to achieving

the traditional pedagogical objective to educate people as persons with a firm mind, as men and women of character whose actions are (also) morally unique and can be perceived as expression of personal identity.

Under these aspects we have to realize that moral education is facing a trilemma. None of the three possibilities just mentioned seems to be acceptable under the conditions of pedagogical deliberations. Of course, in the practice of (business) education we don't feel to be able to make a clear decision between these three ways and then to put one of them into action. As everybody knows it lasts for years to move up from stage to stage and we are far away from being in the position to control all the relevant influences. Nevertheless, teachers and educators want to (and have to) know where the way they try to follow is ending up. It surely makes a difference in educational practice which of the three possibilities outlined is chosen as a goal.

To avoid the trilemma there seems to remain only one further chance, which is discussed not by educators but by economists. If you want to have morally homogeneous people on a high level you must offer them a world in which it is desirable to be morally mature. From this the idea of „moralizing" the economy follows. This idea is not new, indeed. At least since the beginning of modern times when commerce and trade started to play an ever more important part in the supply of the world population there have been famous men deliberating the moral problems of economy (e.g. Martin Luther, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, to mention only three outstanding thinkers). Nowadays, facing the worldwide ecological problems as a side effect of mankind's economic actions the topic of ethics is booming again.

Two main strategies are currently discussed to reach the goal of an ethically acceptable economy. The first coincides, to put it briefly, with the ideas of Kohlberg in trying to make actors morally mature. The second strategy is sceptically looking at mankind from an ethical perspective. Therefore the idea is to give the economy strong rules forcing the subjects to observe them on pain of high costs. In terms of moral education these two strategies are suitable to the first two alternatives of the trilemma mentioned above. It seems to the author of this paper that only the latter one can be regarded as being realistic. But even so, this would by no means be reason enough to stop all efforts in moral education affairs: Not only do we - as scientists - want to know everything about the development of moral judgment; as human beings we are also in need of partners, friends, and companions whom we can trust in, and finally, every society needs the approval of its basic norms on the part of its members as citizens.

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